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ABSTRACT

In the summer of 1995, 371 establishments in Bedford County, Pennsylvania, were surveyed regarding their opinions of the quality of the local work force. The purpose of the study was to provide evaluation data for planning and curriculum development at the secondary and post-secondary school levels. Forty-three percent of the employers responded. Among the major study findings were the following: (1) nearly 9 of 10 establishments use informal on-the-job training, and 6 of 10 establishments use formal in-company programs to train employees; (2) half of all workers use computers at least once weekly; (3) county workers need additional education and training; (4) demand for training is highest in the areas of communication, management, marketing, computers, and computation skills and lower in the areas of technical or mechanical training; (5) most employers want college-level educational opportunities for their workers; (6) although most employers believe that their employees would benefit from additional preparation, most are generally satisfied with the quality of the county's work force; (7) more than one-fourth of the respondents have received work force training assistance from a public/nonprofit organization during the past 2 years; and (8) employers rate the quality of Bedford County schools as good. (Eighteen tables/figures are included. The survey instrument and cover letter are appended.) (MN)

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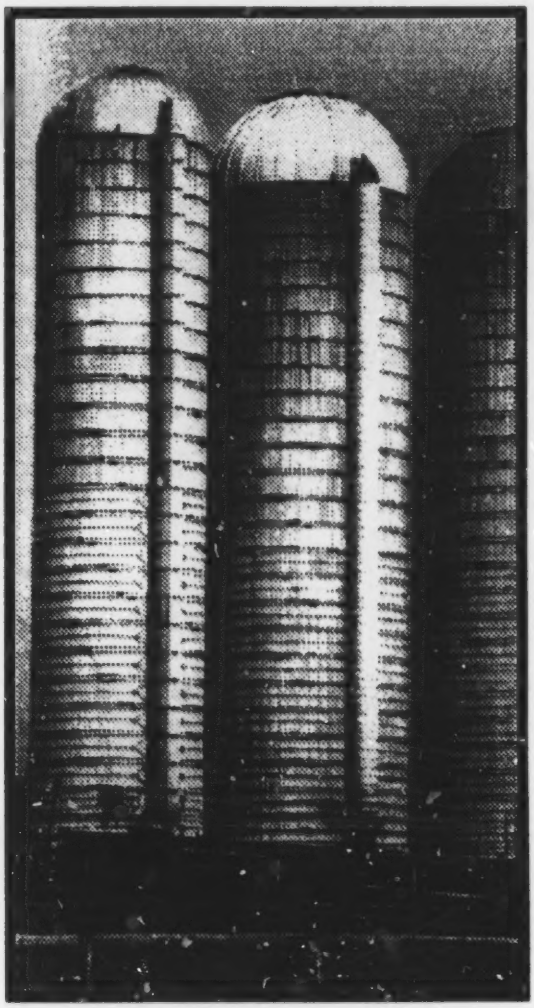
Bedford County
Employer Needs Assessment



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Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment

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August 1995

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Allegany Community College, in cooperation with Bedford County, Pennsylvania, officials and human resource organizations, conducted an employer assessment survey of farm, business, and government/non-profit establishments during the summer of 1995. The purpose of this study was to provide evaluation data for planning and curriculum development at the secondary and post-secondary school levels. The survey was mailed to 371 establishments and returned by forty-three percent of them, after accounting for non-delivered mail and defunct enterprises. The major findings of this survey are summarized below:

- Bedford County establishments rate themselves highly in each of nine areas of business performance. Quality control was viewed as the biggest strength followed by management and labor relations. Rated lowest (but still above the industry average) were marketing/sales and diversification.

- When training workers, nearly nine out of ten establishments use informal on-the-job training, and six out of ten use formal in-company programs. Employers were more likely to use state and local government or federal agencies for upgrading worker skills than the local educational system. Less than five percent of the respondents indicated that they used high school, technical or community colleges, or four year colleges or universities on a regular basis for worker education and training.

- For the average employer, one-half of the workers use a computer at least once a week.

- Bedford County employers spend an average of $200 per employee on training.

- County workers are in need of additional education and training, particularly in the areas of communication, management, marketing, computers, and computation skills. There is less demand for technical or mechanical training.

- Most employers want college-level educational opportunities for their workers in the region. Programs in the areas of computer and information sciences, business management, and marketing and distribution were identified as most needed. Many farmers (and some non-farmers) identified a need for instructional programs in agricultural fields.

- Although respondents believe that many workers could benefit from additional school preparation, they retain a generally favorable view of workforce quality. Workers are regarded as reliable and loyal. They have good work skills and are trainable. They are productive and can adapt to different situations.

- Bedford County employers rely on word of mouth for most employee recruiting. Local newspaper advertising is used by nearly half of the respondents. Public and private employment agencies are also popular. Only one out of ten firms recruits employees from local educational institutions, but four out of ten offer opportunities for students to work part-time during the summer and one out of five offers student internships.

- Over one-quarter of the respondents reported having received assistance from a public or non-profit organization during the last two years. Over half of the assisted firms received workforce training.

- Employers rated the quality of Bedford County schools as good. The highest marks went to the kindergartens and preschools. Secondary schools received somewhat lower evaluations.

- Recognition of Allegany Community College and the Bedford-Everett Area Vocational Technical School is high. The overwhelming majority of employers familiar with these institutions rated their performance as "excellent" or "good."

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1.0 Introduction and Research Design

This study was conducted to provide evaluation data for planning and curriculum development at the secondary and post-secondary school levels in Bedford County, Pennsylvania. By questioning County employers about employee qualities and qualifications, workforce educational needs, and curriculum preferences, survey organizers hoped to gain a better understanding of the performance of local educational institutions and identify new curriculum needs. Assisting in this project were several agencies and associations active in human resource development in the County, including: Allegany Community College which operates an expanding branch Center in Bedford County, the Bedford-Everett Area Vocational-Technical School, the Bedford County Human Resources Association, the Bedford County Job Service, the Bedford County Commissioners, the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce, the Bedford County Tourist Promotion Agency, and the Bedford County Office of Economic Development.

The instrument used in this survey is based partly on two questionnaires used in the state of West Virginia by the West Virginia University Extension Service. The first is the Survey of Technology Use in West Virginia Manufacturing, used to gather information about the technological extension needs of small and medium-sized manufacturers (Rephann and Shapira, 1993). The second was the Business Retention and Expansion Survey designed by Dr. Eric Thompson of the Bureau of Business Research at West Virginia University. It is used by the WVU Extension Service to provide information to communities that will help them to devise strategies to encourage industry retention and growth.

The initial instrument was revised after consulting with members of the aforementioned Bedford County organizations and selected ACC administrators. The resulting questionnaire is included in Appendix A. Part A of the questionnaire asks employers to provide general information about their establishments, such as size, age, industry, and perceived business strengths. Part B solicits information about workforce characteristics. Employers are asked about their methods of training, levels of investment in training, employee educational achievement levels, and employee qualities. Part C asks employers to assess their need for education and training in fifteen different training areas. In part D, firms are invited to describe their employee recruitment activities and difficulties encountered in recruiting qualified applicants in several occupational categories. Part E allows firms to evaluate the quality of schools in Bedford County and to suggest programs or activities that should be introduced in local schools.

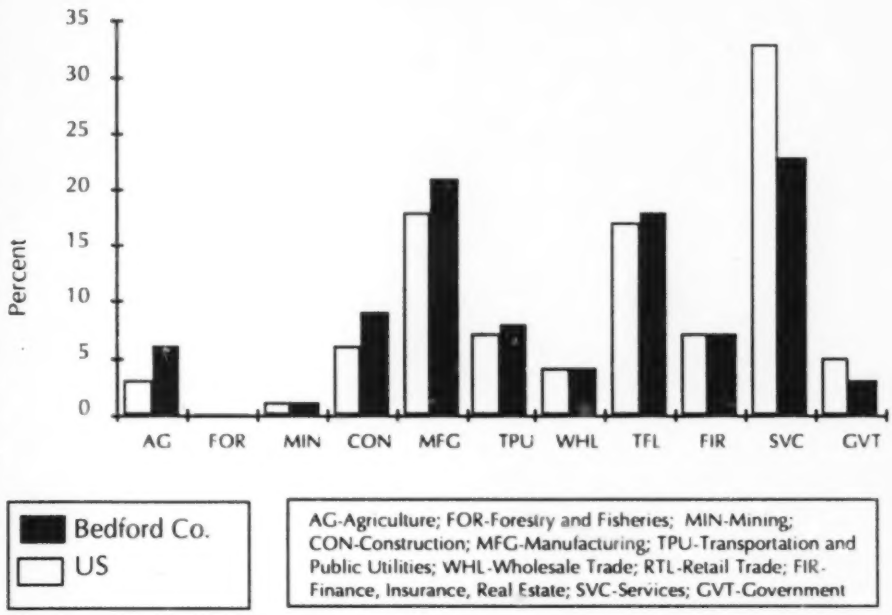
The survey was mailed to 371 businesses, farms, and government or non-profit agencies in the county. This list was obtained from the Bedford County Office of Economic Development and the Honorable Dick Rice, a Bedford County Commissioner. The Office of Economic Development Office assembled a list of 321 addresses from the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce membership list and several other sources. Mr. Rice chose a sample of fifty farmers from a list of 580 Pennsylvania State University Agricultural Extension Service clients. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 1020 establishments operating in Bedford County in 1991 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1992b) and 1009 farms in 1987 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1994). Therefore, the address lists assembled for this survey cover only a small portion of the firms operating in the County. One potential bias may be introduced by the sampling method used here. Because sample employers participate in networks which convey information about competitive business practices, they are more likely to innovate and exhibit more "progressive" attitudes concerning human resource development.

In May of 1995, the 371 firms on the final survey list were sent a packet which contained a survey instrument, an addressed and postage-paid envelope, and two cover letters. An additional cover letter encouraging participation from the agricultural sector was mailed to County farmers. The three cover letters are exhibited in Appendix B. Two weeks after the initial mailing, a post-card reminder was sent to non-respondents. This was followed by a third mailing to non-respondents four weeks after the initial mailing which contained a cover letter, questionnaire and addressed, postage-paid envelope. Of the firms surveyed, 157 had returned usable questionnaires by the closing date in mid-July. One address was found to be redundant. Six addresses were defunct or the mail could not be forwarded. Therefore, the response rate of the survey was relatively high, 157/364 = 43 percent. Ordinarily, mail surveys of this type elicit response rates in the twenty-five to thirty-five percent range. Perhaps, because the survey sample is biased in favor of innovative employers, the response rate for the survey was much higher.

2.0 The Bedford County Economy

Bedford County is a predominantly rural county—over ninety percent of its population resides in areas with less than 2,500 residents. Compared to the United States taken as a whole, it is relatively specialized in basic sectors such as agriculture, mining, construction, and manufacturing (see figure 2.1) and under-represented in private and public services. Per-capita income is comparatively low. It is less than seventy-five percent of U.S. per capita income and has been receding for nearly two decades (see figure 2.2). However, in recent years the economic picture has brightened. Unemployment has declined from the persistent double digit range and per-capita income is rising once again. The County experienced positive population growth during the 1980s and is projected to have continued growth through the 1990s.

Figure 2.1 Industry Profile, 1990
Bedford County versus U.S. Employment

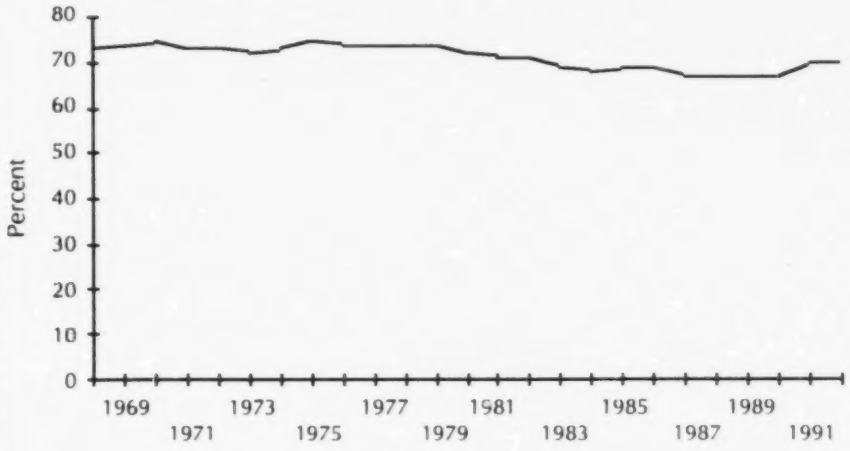


Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1992.

Like other rural counties, the educational level of the Bedford County workforce is relatively low. According to the 1990 Census, only sixty-nine percent of its residents had completed high school (compared to seventy-five nationwide) and eight percent had completed college (compared to twenty percent nationwide). Part of this low educational achievement can be attributed to the County's high proportion of middle-aged and elderly residents (see figure 2.3). Since older groups are typically less educated than more recent generations, one can anticipate a discrepancy based on the age structure of the population alone. However, other forces are at work also. Even recent graduates show a lower propensity to pursue college degrees than residents elsewhere. Only sixteen percent of Bedford County residents in the eighteen to twenty-

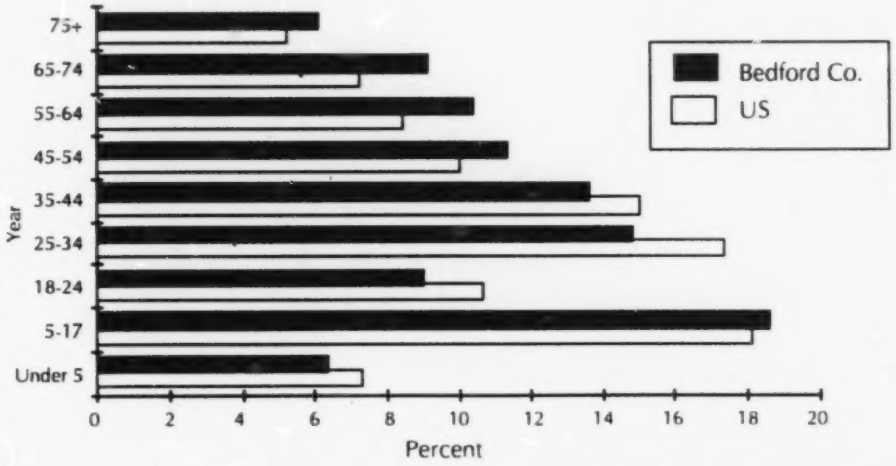
four year age bracket were enrolled in College during 1990. This compares to thirty-six percent rate for Pennsylvania taken as a whole and is the fifteenth lowest among Pennsylvania Counties.

Figure 2.2 Bedford County Per Capita Income, 1969-92 as percentage of U.S.



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 1994

Figure 2.3 Age Profile, 1990 Bedford County versus U.S. Population



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1992.

3.0 Survey Respondent Characteristics

Table 3.1 below shows the characteristics of the 157 survey respondents. Whenever possible, the respondent sample is compared to all County establishments as revealed in the U.S. Census Bureau publication *County Business Patterns*. The second and third columns show that the private non-agricultural survey respondents were generally larger establishments than all private non-agricultural establishments operating in the County during 1991. Service and manufacturing establishments are slightly over-represented in the sample, while trade (wholesale and retail), construction, and public utility establishments are underrepresented. Over half of the respondents had been in operation at their present location for more than twenty years, and twenty-eight percent reported having company locations outside of Bedford County. Only four percent had union representation in the workplace. Sales for the responding firms were generally healthy. Over half reported that sales had been rising steadily during the last two years. Only four percent indicated falling sales.

Table 3.1. Characteristics of survey respondents and all County establishments.

Business age	Number Respondents	%	% of County Establishments*
1-9	34	23	
10-19	33	22	
20-49	56	38	
Total	149	100	
Number of employees			
1-4	33	27	56
5-9	31	25	21
10-19	24	19	13
20-49	17	14	6
50+	19	15	4
Total	124	100	100
Industry			
Agriculture	(22)**	-	-
Mining	0	0	0
Construction	5	4	10
Transportation, Public Utility	9	7	10
Retail Trade	30	24	31
Wholesale Trade	4	3	5
Manufacturing	17	13	7
Services	62	49	37
Government	(5)**	-	-
Total	127**	100	100

- Percentage of respondents with other business locations = 28%
- Percentage of respondents with labor unions = 4%
- Percent of establishments with sales levels that have:
  - grown steadily 56%
  - fallen steadily 4%
  - been stable 32%
  - been variable 8%

* *Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1992b.*

** *Industry excluded from percentage calculations.*

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

Survey respondents are high-achievers. They rated themselves favorably in each of nine areas of business performance (see table 3.2). Quality control was viewed as the biggest strength followed by management and labor relations. Rated lower (but still above the industry average) were marketing and sales and diversification. When the responses of a sub-sample of seventeen Bedford County manufacturing establishments were compared to a benchmark group of West Virginia manufacturers, the Bedford County group usually rated itself higher (see figure 3.1). Only in the areas of quality control and inventory management did it rate itself slightly lower.

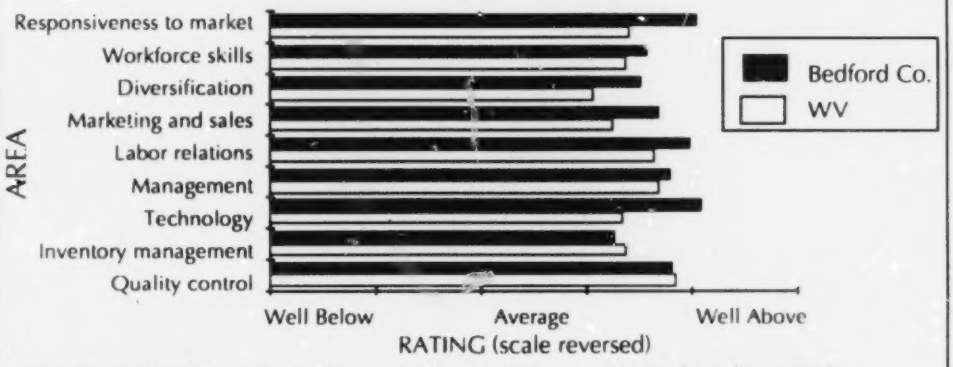
Table 3.2 Self-rating of business strengths relative to industry standards, percent of all respondents and mean rating*.

	Well above Average (1)	(2)	Industry Average (3)	(4)	Well Below Average (5)	Mean Rating
Quality control	38	34	25	3	0	1.93
Management	30	35	31	4	0	2.09
Labor relations	25	42	30	2	1	2.12
Technology	28	31	29	11	1	2.24
Workforce skills	26	30	38	5	1	2.24
Responsiveness to market	28	29	34	9	0	2.25
Inventory management	21	33	36	9	1	2.36
Marketing and sales	20	31	37	11	1	2.42
Diversification	17	34	39	9	1	2.43

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

**Mean rating refers to the average rating of a particular attribute by establishments based on the scale 1-5, ranging from (1) "well above average" to (5) "well below average."*

Figure 3.1 Manufacturers' Self-Rating Bedford County versus West Virginia



Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 and Rephann and Shapira (1993).

4.0 WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

Bedford County businesses, farmers, and agencies were asked to evaluate the importance of different methods of education and training to their operations (see table 4.1). Nearly nine out of ten establishments indicated that they used informal on-the-job training, and six out of ten employed formal in-company programs. Trade associations, including seminars conducted by these associations, were used by half of the respondents. Employers were more likely to use state and local government or federal agencies for upgrading worker skills than the local educational system. Less than five percent of the respondents indicated that they used high school, technical or community colleges, or four year colleges or universities on a regular basis. A subset of Bedford County manufacturers showed the same pattern. This result stands in marked contrast to the result obtained in a survey of West Virginia manufacturers. In that survey, two out of every five employers reported using schools and community colleges for employee training (Rephann and Shapira, 1993).

Table 4.1 Sources of education and training, percent of all respondents.

	Do Not Use	Plan to Use	Used Sometimes	Used Often	Used*
Informal on-the-job	12	1	20	67	87
Formal in-company programs	37	2	41	20	61
Trade associations	47	3	33	17	50
State and local government agencies	57	3	31	9	40
Apprenticeship programs	60	6	30	4	34
Televised/computerized instruction	54	4	34	8	32
Federal agencies	70	2	26	2	28
High school vocational education programs	70	3	25	2	27
Technical or community colleges in area	67	6	24	3	27
4-year colleges/universities	70	4	23	3	26
Technical or community colleges elsewhere	74	2	22	2	24
High school non-vocational programs	84	1	14	1	15

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College).
** The category labelled "used" is the sum of categories marked "used sometimes" and "used often."*

The average Bedford County employee, revealed in table 4.2, is not underschooled but underprepared. He or she is a mature worker with better educational achievement than the average County resident as revealed by the U.S. 1990 Census of Population (see table 4.2). On average, only five percent is without a high school degree or equivalent. Nearly forty percent of the employees has some post-secondary education or training, compared to twenty percent for all County residents. Still, Bedford County firms indicated that they require a better prepared worker than is available in the area. Computer literacy is increasingly important. For the average respondent, half of the

workforce must use a computer at least once a week. Trainability and the ability to learn on-the-job are also important. The average establishment invests $200 per employee on worker training. Some employers indicated that remedial education for new employees is sometimes needed. In open-ended comments, some respondents indicated that the local workforce needs more preparation in the areas of computers, writing and communication skills, and business computation.

Table 4.2 Employee education, age, and investment, percent of all respondents.

Median Education Attainment:	
Less than a high school diploma	5%
High school diploma	58%
Education towards technical or associate's degree	12%
Community College or technical school graduate	12%
Four Year College/University graduate	13%
Total	100%

Median age of employees = 37 years

Median amount spent on training each employee = $200

Median % of employees that uses a computer on job at least once a week=50%

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

Although respondents believe that workers could benefit from further education and training, they retain a generally favorable view of workforce quality (see table 4.3). Workers are regarded as reliable and loyal. They have good work skills and are trainable. They are productive and can adapt to different situations.

Table 4.3 Employee Qualities, percent of total respondents and mean rating.

	Very Good (1)	Good (2)	Fair (3)	Poor (4)	Very Poor (5)	Mean Rating
Reliability	55	39	4	2	0	1.53
Loyalty	53	36	9	2	0	1.61
Attitude	42	51	5	1	1	1.67
Work skills	35	56	8	1	0	1.75
Trainability	38	50	12	1	0	1.76
Productivity	34	57	8	1	0	1.78
Adaptability	33	50	16	1	0	1.84
Initiative	27	54	15	4	1	1.98
Education	17	55	26	1	1	2.12
Leadership	20	45	30	5	0	2.20

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

5.0 Education and Training Needs

When asked about the areas in which workforce skills could be improved, Bedford County respondents stressed communication, managerial, marketing, computing and computation skills rather than technical skills (see table 5.1). Ranked particularly low were those skills commonly associated with a manufacturing setting, such as maintenance and repair, technical operator skills, and CAD/CAM computer training. This ordering of skills changes little when the sub-sample of seventeen manufacturing respondents are examined. Respondents reiterated in open-ended comments that communication and interpersonal skills are their foremost needs, followed by basic computer literacy and a good knowledge of business mathematics and measurement.

Table 5.1 Labor Force Training Needs, percent of all respondents and mean rating.

	All (1)	Most (2)	Some (3)	Few (4)	None (5)	Mean Rating
Communication skills	38	23	20	11	8	2.27
Group/interpersonal skills	26	25	23	14	12	2.61
Leadership skills	23	22	31	14	10	2.65
Managerial skills	21	17	40	17	8	2.73
Computer training - business	23	16	31	18	12	2.80
Computation skills	21	16	31	16	16	2.88
Marketing/sales	20	16	28	22	14	2.95
Labor relations	11	18	26	25	20	3.25
Finance/accounting/bookkeeping	12	11	30	33	14	3.28
Reading and writing	16	11	24	21	28	3.35
Inventory control/purchasing	7	10	34	25	24	3.49
Maintenance and repair	10	9	29	25	27	3.49
Technical operator skills	8	12	25	21	34	3.63
Computer training - CAD/CAM	10	9	21	24	36	3.67
Other						

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

Many employers want and need college-level education for their workers. The college level curricula shown in figure 5.1 were identified by at least 10 percent of the respondents as likely to be beneficial to them in training current and future employees (for a similar survey designed to assess secondary school Tech Prep curricula needs, please see *The Bedford Area Business Survey Report* 1995). Fourteen programs are shown. The ordering coincides with the needs revealed in the previous table. Some

programs were supported by a broad spectrum of respondents. For instance, computer and information sciences was selected by ninety-nine employers, followed by business management and marketing and distribution (ninety-two and sixty respectively). Although respondents selected communications (81) and mathematics often (31), subsequent employer comments suggest that the developmental or remedial training rather than college level education is needed in these areas. Other programs appeal to specific sectors of the economy. For instance, farmers were likely to feel a need for agricultural programs, such as agricultural business/production (selected by twenty five respondents) and agricultural sciences (18).

Figure 5.1 Employer Curriculum Needs
Curricula cited by 15 or more employers

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995

6.0 Employee Recruitment and Availability

Bedford County employers use a variety of methods to recruit new employees (see table 6.1). Most rely on word of mouth. Local newspaper advertising is used by nearly half of the respondents. Public and private employment agencies are also popular. Government enterprises indicated that Civil Service announcements and exams were used to choose job candidates. Only one in ten of the respondents reported recruiting employees from local educational institutions. For many students, the best opportunity to gain full-time entry-level work is through part-time work or internship. Each is used by Bedford County employers (see table 6.2). Over four out of ten firms offer opportunities for students to work part-time during the summer to gain job experience, and one out of five offer student internships.

Table 6.1 Methods used to recruit new employees, percent of all respondents.

Word of mouth	71
Local newspaper advertising	46
Local job service	36
Private employment agencies, temporary services, etc.	16
Recruiting at Educational Institution	12
State or Region Wide Newspaper advertising	8
Other	15

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses, farms, and agencies.

Table 6.2
Opportunities offered to students, percent of all respondents.

	Do Not Use	Plan to Use	Used Sometimes	Used Often
Internships	71	6	19	4
Part-time summer employment	49	8	28	15
Company scholarships	90	2	3	4
Other				

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses, farms and agencies.

Many employers reported difficulties in finding qualified applicants for skilled and professional level jobs (see table 6.3). Employers are only "sometimes" able to find qualified professional and management employees from the area. They are slightly more likely to find skilled and semi-skilled employees. In contrast, a majority of the firms reported that they were "always" or "often" able to find qualified clerical and unskilled employees.

Table 6.3 Ability to hire employees in different occupational groups from the region, percent of all respondents and mean rating.

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (4)	Never (5)	NA	Mean Rating
Professional employees	6	13	24	22	5	30	3.09
Management	8	12	18	17	7	38	3.05
Skilled employees	10	20	30	13	5	22	2.80
Semi-skilled employees	14	28	30	6	3	19	2.44
Clerical employees	29	22	18	4	4	23	2.16
Unskilled employees	39	17	12	4	4	24	1.92

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

7.0 Local Educational Resources

Over one-quarter of the respondents reported having received assistance from a public or non-profit organization during the last two years (see table 7.1). This assistance usually was in the form of workforce training or financing.

Table 7.1 Assistance received from programs in the last 2 years, percent of all respondents.

Received assistance from a program sponsored by federal, state, or local government, a non-profit corporation, or a university/college?	28
Types of assistance received:	
Training of workforce	14
Financing, loan assistance, or venture capital	10
Management assistance/business planning	6
Assistance with hazardous materials or safety	4
Marketing of products, export assistance, or government procurement	3
Technology assistance, productivity improvement	1
Other	6

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

Employers were asked to rate the quality of Bedford County schools which were divided into several functional categories (see table 7.2). Six out of ten respondents indicated that the kindergarten and pre-schools were "good" or "very good." Employers were often unable to evaluate the Community College and Vocational school in the county, but when these schools were identified by name (see table 7.3), less than five percent still did not recognize them. On average, these institutions were rated "good" (see table 7.4). Secondary schools received slightly lower marks. Nearly one in three respondents rated them as fair or poor. However, generalizations are not always valid because, as one respondent noted, the County is splintered into several educational jurisdictions that vary in quality.

Table 7.2. Bedford County school ratings, percent of all respondents and mean rating.

	Very Good (1)	Good (2)	Fair (3)	Poor (4)	Very Poor (5)	NA	Mean
Kindergarten/pre-schools	18	42	12	1	0	27	1.95
Community College	12	42	8	1	0	38	1.98
Vocational school	10	42	12	2	1	33	2.08
Primary schools	12	44	16	2	0	26	2.11
Secondary schools	10	34	25	7	1	23	2.37
Other							

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

Table 7.3. Recognition of ACC and Bedford-Everett Area Vocational-Technical School, percent of all respondents.

	ACC	Vo-Tech
Not previously heard of	1	3
Heard of, but not aware of the programs it offers	50	42
Aware of it and its programs	38	32
Aware of it and have had employees who attended or graduated.	11	12

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

Table 7.4 Ratings of ACC and Bedford County Vocational-Technical School, percent of all respondents.

	ACC	Vo-Tech
Excellent	6	8
Good	50	46
Fair	7	11
Poor	0	2
Don't know	37	33

Source: Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 157 farms, businesses and agencies.

References

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

BEDFORD COUNTY EMPLOYER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

CONFIDENTIAL ☐☐☐☐

Section A. Background Information

A1. In which year was this business/agency established? _____

A2. How many employees do you have in this business/agency? _____

A3. What industry best describes your business/agency? (Check single best answer)

- ☐Agriculture
- ☐Mining
- ☐Construction
- ☐Transportation
- ☐Communication/Utility
- ☐Retail Trade
- ☐Wholesale Trade/Distribution
- ☐Manufacturing
- ☐Services
- ☐Government
- Other (Please describe) _____

A4. Is this the only location for your business/agency? ☐Yes ☐No

A5. Are workers at this business/agency unionized? ☐Yes ☐No

A6. How would you rate your business/agency strengths in the following areas relative to your industry average?

	Well above Average		Industry Average		Well Below Average
a. Quality control	1	2	3	4	5
b. Inventory management	1	2	3	4	5
c. Technology	1	2	3	4	5
d. Management	1	2	3	4	5
e. Labor relations	1	2	3	4	5
f. Marketing and sales	1	2	3	4	5
g. Diversification	1	2	3	4	5
h. Workforce skills	1	2	3	4	5
i. Responsiveness to market	1	2	3	4	5

A7. Over the past three years, sales/production levels at your business/agency have:

☐grown steadily ☐fallen steadily ☐been stable ☐been variable

Section B: Business Workforce Characteristics

B1. How often is each of the following sources of education and training used by your business/agency to improve the skills of its employees?

	Do Not Use	Plan to Use	Used Sometimes	Used Often
a. Informal on-the-job	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Formal in-company programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. High school vocational education programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. High school non-vocational programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Technical or community colleges in area	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Technical or community colleges elsewhere	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. 4-year colleges/universities	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Televised/computerized instruction	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Apprenticeship programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. State and local government agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Federal agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Trade associations	☐	☐	☐	☐

m. Other (please describe) _____

B2. Please estimate how much your business/agency spent during the past year on training employees?

$ _____ per employee

B3. Approximately what percentage of your employees have the following kinds of education?

Less than a high school diploma	_____%
High school diploma	_____%
Education towards technical or associate degree	_____%
Community College or technical school graduate	_____%
Four Year College/University graduate	_____%

B4. What percentage of your employees use a computer on the job at least once a week? _____%

B5. How would you rate your employees in the following areas?

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
a. Attitude	1	2	3	4	5
b. Productivity	1	2	3	4	5
c. Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
d. Work skills	1	2	3	4	5
e. Education	1	2	3	4	5
f. Reliability	1	2	3	4	5
g. Loyalty	1	2	3	4	5
h. Initiative	1	2	3	4	5
i. Trainability	1	2	3	4	5
j. Adaptability	1	2	3	4	5
k. Other (please describe) _____					

B6. What is the approximate average age of your employees? _____

Section C: Education and Training Needs

C1. What portion of your workforce would benefit from further education and training in the following areas?

	All	Most	Some	Few	None
a. Computation skills	1	2	3	4	5
b. Computer training - business	1	2	3	4	5
c. Computer training - CAD/CAM	1	2	3	4	5
d. Math/engineering skills	1	2	3	4	5
e. Group/interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4	5
f. Managerial skills	1	2	3	4	5
g. Labor relations	1	2	3	4	5
h. Communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
i. Technical operator skills	1	2	3	4	5
j. Maintenance and repair	1	2	3	4	5
k. Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
l. Marketing/sales	1	2	3	4	5
m. Finance/accounting/bookkeeping	1	2	3	4	5
n. Inventory control/purchasing	1	2	3	4	5
o. Leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
p. Other (please describe) _____					

Section D: Employee Recruitment and Availability

D1. To what extent are you able to hire skilled employees in the following occupational groups from the region when you need them?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	NA
a. Management	1	2	3	4	5	0
b. Professional employees	1	2	3	4	5	0
c. Clerical employees	1	2	3	4	5	0
d. Skilled employees	1	2	3	4	5	0
e. Semi-skilled employees	1	2	3	4	5	0
f. Unskilled employees	1	2	3	4	5	0

D2. Which of the following methods does your business/agency use to recruit new employees? (Check all that apply)

- ❑Word of mouth
- ❑Private employment agencies, temporary services, etc.
- ❑Local job service
- ❑Local newspaper advertising
- ❑State or region wide newspaper advertising
- ❑Recruiting at educational institution
- ❑Other (please describe)_____

D3. How often does your business/agency offer the following opportunities to students from the Bedford County area?

	Do Not Use	Plan to Use	Used Sometimes	Used Often
a. Internships	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Part-time summer employment	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Scholarships	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Other (please describe) _____				

D4. Please specify any special skills or areas of knowledge that you feel a person should have in order to qualify for jobs in your business/agency.

_____

_____

_____

Section E: Local Educational Resources

E1. In the last 2 years, has your business/agency received assistance from a program sponsored by federal, state, or local government, a non-profit corporation, or a university/college?

❑Yes ❑No ❑Don't know

If YES: Please indicate the types of assistance received. Check one or more as appropriate.

a. Management assistance/business planning	❑
b. Training of workforce	❑
c. Financing, loan assistance, or venture capital	❑
d. Marketing of products, export assistance, or government procurement	❑
e. Assistance with hazardous materials or safety	❑
f. Technology assistance, productivity improvement	❑
g. Other (please describe) _____	

E2. How would you rate the quality of Bedford County schools in each of the following areas?

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	NA/ Don't Know
a. Kindergarten/pre-schools	1	2	3	4	5	0
b. Primary schools	1	2	3	4	5	0
c. Secondary schools	1	2	3	4	5	0
d. Vocational school	1	2	3	4	5	0
e. Community College	1	2	3	4	5	0
f. Other (please describe) _____						

E3. How much do you know about the Allegany Community College Center in Bedford County? Please check the box that best describes your knowledge of the College.

- ❑ Not previoulsy heard of
- ❑ Heard of, but not aware of the programs it offers
- ❑ Aware of it and its programs
- ❑ Aware of it and have had employees who attended or graduated

E4. If you have heard of Allegany Community College, how would you rate the quality of education provided?
❑ Excellent ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor ❑ Don't know

E5. Listed below are programs which community colleges offer. Please indicate which programs would be useful to your business/agency in training current and future employees. (Check all that apply)

❑ Agricultural business and production
❑ Agricultural sciences
❑ Architecture and planning
❑ Area, ethnic and cultural studies
❑ Business management
❑ Communications
❑ Computer and information sciences
❑ Conservation/renewable natural resources
❑ Construction trades
❑ Education
❑ Engineering
❑ Engineering technologies
❑ English language and literature
❑ Foreign languages and literatures
❑ Health sciences/health professions
❑ Home economics
❑ Law and legal studies
❑ Library sciences
❑ Life sciences/biological sciences
❑ Marketing and distribution
❑ Mathematics
❑ Mechanics and repair
❑ Military technologies
❑ Multi-interdisciplinary studies
❑ Parks, recreation, and leisure
❑ Personal services
❑ Philosophy,religion,and theology
❑ Physical sciences
❑ Precision production trades
❑ Protective services
❑ Psychology
❑ Public administration
❑ Social sciences and history
❑ Transport and materials moving
❑ Other (please describe) _____

E6. Please describe how Allegany Community College's Bedford County Center can better help you with the training of future employees.

_____
_____
_____

E7. How much do you know about the Bedford-Everett Area Vocational-Technical School?
Please check the box that best describes your knowledge of the College.

❑Not previoulsy heard of
❑Heard of, but not aware of the programs it offers
❑Aware of it and its programs
❑Aware of it and have had employees who attended or graduated

E8. If you are familiar with the Bedford-Everett Area Vocational-Technical School, how would you rate the quality of education provided?
❑ Excellent ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor ❑ Don't know

E9. Please describe how the Bedford-Everett Area Vocational-Technical School can better help you with the training of future employees.

_____
_____
_____

E10. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your education and training needs, any problems you have had recruiting qualified employees, or ways in which local education or training could help your firm?

_____
_____
_____

E11. Would you like to be contacted for further discussion of your educational and training needs?
❑Yes ❑No If yes, contact person: _____ Telephone: _____

Thank you for your help.
Please place the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope and mail.

APPENDIX B

Survey Cover Letters

ALLEGANY COMMUNITY COLLEGE • WILLOWBROOK ROAD • CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND 21502-2596

OFFICE OF
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
AND PLANNING
(301) 724-7700

April 19, 1995

Dear Bedford County Employer:

We would like to request your assistance in an assessment we are conducting of the educational needs of employers in Bedford County. Enclosed you will find a questionnaire which surveys your use of different education and training resources, your training procedures, and your assessments of local education. This survey will provide information for the design of educational programs in Bedford County.

We hope that you will complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed postage paid envelope within ten days. If we do not hear from you, we shall contact you to see if you have any questions. Participation is voluntary. Therefore, if you do not wish to be contacted, please reply as such and return the message in the enclosed envelope.

We believe that our study is worth your time and effort. We can provide the County and Allegany Community College with potentially valuable information and, with your participation, may be able to promote the economic development of the region.

Please note that the survey questions refer to your site in Bedford County. We understand that employers do not always keep exact record of all of their activities. If you do not have adequate information on a particular item or feel uncomfortable about providing it, please feel free either to omit it or provide your best estimates.

Please be assured that each questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. The information that we will release will be in summary form only. Your firm will not be connected with any responses in this questionnaire. The company code at the top of the first page will be used only to gauge the response rate of the survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (301) 724-7700, x 207.

I greatly appreciate your assistance and consideration.

Sincerely,

Terry Rephann
Institutional Research Officer

Enclosures

BEDFORD COUNTY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
203 SOUTH JULIANA STREET
BEDFORD, PENNSYLVANIA 15522
(814) 623-4816
(814) 623-6455

April 17, 1995

Dear Bedford County Businessperson,

In an effort to be responsive to the needs of the local business community, we are forwarding an Employer Needs Questionnaire to you. The results of the survey will be used for curriculum development at Allegany Community College-Bedford County and the Bedford-Everett Area Vocational Technical School.

The following individuals have been instrumental in the development of this survey:

Kathy Barley, Bedford County Human Resources Association
Larry Foor, Bedford County Job Service
Rodney Heininger, Bedford-Everett Area Vo-Tech
Terry Rephan, Allegany Community College
Dick Rice, Bedford County Commissioner
Carol Snyder, Bedford County Chamber of Commerce
Connie Wright, Bedford County Tourist Promotion Agency

The results will be used to help prepare Bedford County's workforce to meet your needs. We appreciate your efforts and look forward to hearing from you. Should you have any additional questions or comments, please feel free to contact us accordingly.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bette Slayton

Bette Slayton
Executive Director

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

COUNTY OF BEDFORD
P. O. Box 166
SOUTH JULIANA STREET
BEDFORD, PENNSYLVANIA 15522

Telephone: 814-623-4807
Fax: 814-623-0991
T.T.Y.: 1-800-654-5984

DICK M. RICE
KIM T. COON
GARY W. EBERSOLE
County Commissioners
Registration Commissioners
County Board of Elections

GORDON E. STROUP
County Solicitor
ANNA M. HISSH
Registrar
TAMMY B. KENDALL
Chief Clerk

April 1, 1995

Dear Friend:

Your County Government, the Bedford County Economic Development Association, the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce and the Allegany Community College (ACC) Campus at Everett needs your help.

Agriculture is Bedford County's largest industry and the above mentioned organizations are looking at ways they can help you meet your education needs. The attached questionnaire is basically to find the needs of the manufacturing and retail business and hopefully yours in agriculture. Once your education needs are known, ACC will design and offer courses to meet the needs. So it is very important to fill out and return the enclosed questionnaire.

We thank you in advance for sharing your time and your thoughts with us. By helping each other we can all be successful now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Dick M Rice

Dick M. Rice

"An Equal Employment Opportunity Employer"

CE069509

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Printed Name: Terance J. Tephann	Organization: Allegany Community College
Address: Willow Street Road, Cumberland, MD 21502	Telephone Number: (301) 724-7700 x207
	Date: 10/13/45

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